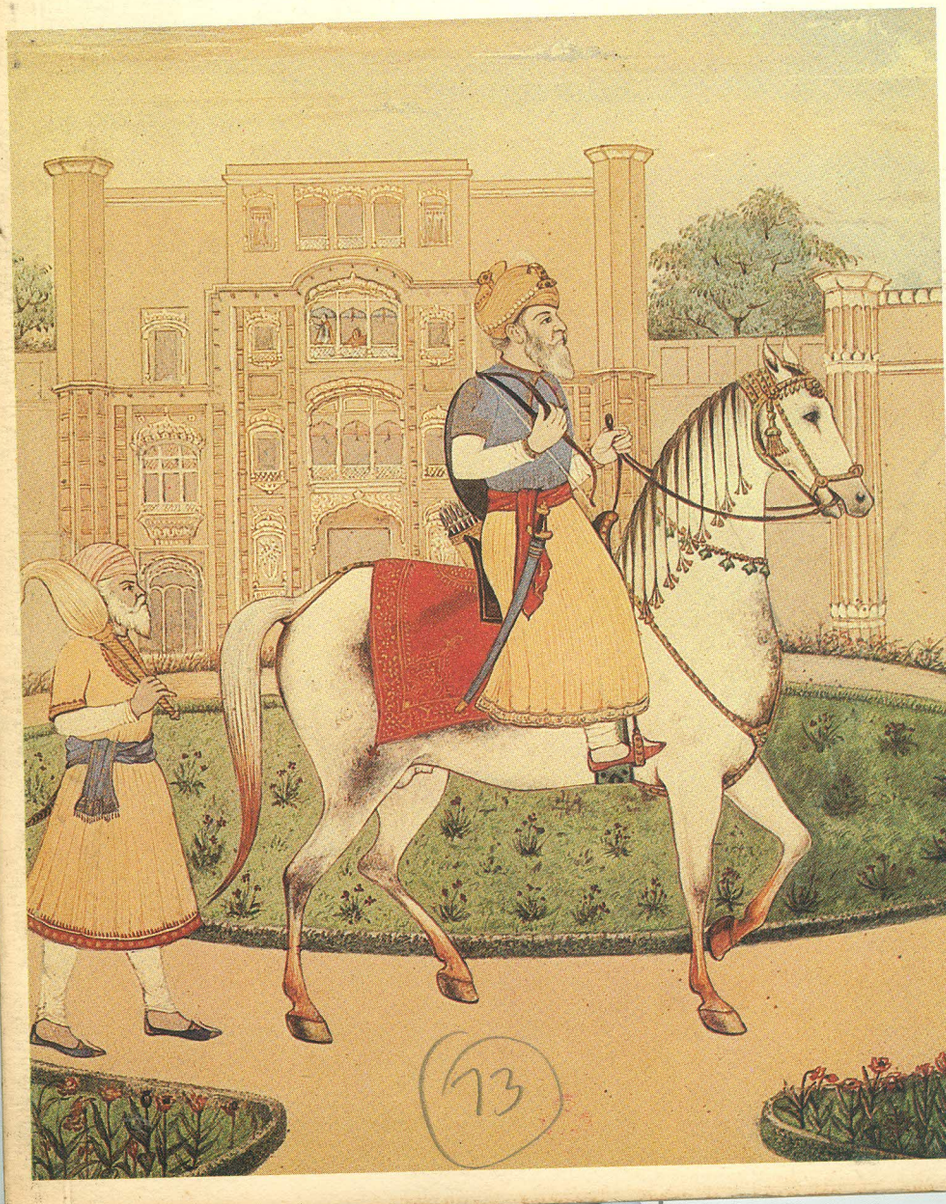
Baba Jassa Singh Ahluwalia Bicentenary Celebrations



Baba Jassa Singh Ahluwalia Bicentenary Celebrations

Inauguration by the Prime Minister of India
SMT. INDIRA GANDHI

Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi
12th March, 1984

DEDICATED TO THE SACRED MEMORY
OF
BABA JASSA SINGH AHLUWALIA
BY
PURE DRINKS

Photographs :

Cover Page : BABA JASSA SINGH AHLUWALIA on horse back. His Haveli at Kapurthala is in the back ground.

First Inside Cover : Babaji in the battle field dealing a mortal blow to Salabat Khan, Commander of Afghan forces occupying the Holy City of Amritsar.

Back Cover Page : Portrait of Babaji as Sultan-ul-Qaum, painted by the British painter Cole

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सत्यमेव जयते

राष्ट्रपति
भारत गणतंत्र
PRESIDENT
REPUBLIC OF INDIA

February 25, 1984

I am glad to know that the Bi-Centenary Celebrations of Baba Jassa Singh Ahluwalia are being organised in Delhi on March 12, 1984.

Baba Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was a great national hero of the eighteenth century. Babaji's admirable courage and chivalry had protected and enriched our rich cultural heritage even during the darkest periods of our history. He fought the invaders to save women and children from their clutches. This earned him the popular appellation of "Bandichhor" (Liberator). Baba Jassa Singh Sahib's compassion, integrity and devotion to the good cause was exemplary and he became a legendary hero in his own life time.

I send my heartiest greetings to the organisers and best wishes for the success of the Bi-Centenary Celebrations of Baba Jassa Singh Ahluwalia.

Zail Singh

(ZAIL SINGH)

प्रधान मन्त्री भारत

PRIME MINISTER,
INDIA.

MESSAGE

Baba Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was a heroic figure of 18th century India. In a period of turmoil and uncertainty, he succeeded in preserving the ideals of chivalry, humanity and tolerance which were later to find full flower in the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He is one of those great Indians from whom the people of today can draw inspiration.

I send my good wishes for the celebration of the Bi-Centenary of Baba Jassa Singh Ahluwalia.

Indira Gandhi

(Indira Gandhi)

New Delhi,
January 5, 1984

Phones: 381380
383301

ALL INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE

24, AKBAR ROAD, NEW DELHI-110011

RAJIV GANDHI M.P.
General Secretary

January 28, 1984

It has given me immense pleasure to know that a national committee has been set up to honour the services rendered by Baba Jassa Singh Ahluwalia to the country and the Panth at the bicentenary of his passing away.

Baba Jassa Singh's life is a saga of heroism, humanism saintliness and service to the country. He was a redoutable warrior who fought against the Afghan and Mughal potentates. Baba Jassa Singh took to arms not to conquer or subjugate but to liberate and in defence of the helpless. He set the highest traditions of chivalry. He had compassion for all and rancour for none and upheld the high moral principles.

He was an ardent devotee of the great Sikh Gurus. His contribution to the restoration of Darbar Sahib in Amritsar to its pristine glory after it was damaged in wanton attacks of Ahmed Shah Abdali shows his deep dedication and reverence for the teachings of Sikh Gurus. His greatness will continue to inspire people to preserve and uphold the truth and moral principles.

मंत्री
विधि, न्याय एवं कम्पनी कार्य
नई दिल्ली-११०००१ (भारत)
MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE
AND COMPANY AFFAIRS
NEW DELHI-110001 (INDIA)

No.13/84/MLJ&CA.

January 5, 1984.

MESSAGE

I am happy to learn that a National Committee, under the Chairmanship of Sardar Buta Singh, Honourable Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Works & Housing and Sports, has been formed to celebrate the bicentenary of Baba Jassa Singh Ahluwalia in the month of February, 1984 and also publish a commemorative Souvenir on the occasion.

2. Jassa Singh was a great national hero who by his admirable courage and bravery not only fought the invaders and saved innumerable people from the clutches of predators but exemplified in himself the qualities of righteousness and patriotism. Transcending the narrow, sectarian barriers of caste and creed, he upheld Dharma, fighting the oppressor and protecting the weak and showed us how a man should live for a noble cause.

3. By remembering Jassa Singh today we are honouring ourselves and I hope the memory of this great son of India will continue to illuminate our lives and inspire us to close our ranks and fight for the unity and integrity of the country.

I send my best wishes to the Committee for the success of the bicentenary programme.

(Jagan Nath Kaushal)

Shri P.N. Chopra,
Baba Jassa Singh Ahluwalia
Bi-centenary Committee,
Sardar Mohan Singh Building,
Connaught Lane, New Delhi-110001

सत्यमेव जयते

मंत्री
संसदीय कार्य, खेल तथा निर्माण और आवास
भारत
नई दिल्ली-110 001

MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS
SPORTS AND WORKS & HOUSING
INDIA
NEW DELHI-110 001

31 January 1984.

MESSAGE

The National Committee for Celebrating the Bi-centenary of Baba Jassa Singh Ahluwalia of which I have the privilege to be the Chairman has made arrangements to observe the occasion in a befitting manner.

Baba Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was the elected Supreme Commander of the Sikh Federation of Misls during the struggle for freedom of the people of Punjab during the later part of the 18 century. He led the Sikhs in the war against Ahmed Shah Abdali in 1762, captured Lahore twice and struck coins in the names of the Gurus. He was also responsible for the liberation of about 2200 women and children from the clutches of Abdali which earned him the popular appelation of "Bandichhor" (liberator).

The lives of such heroes always inspire generations to come to live and fight for cherished values. Baba's message is as much relevant today as it was when he lived. Let us all endeavour to follow it.

Buta Singh.
(Buta Singh)

सत्यमेव जयते

No. M(B)/415/84

राज्य मन्त्री
सूचना और प्रसारण तथा संसदीय कार्य
भारत

MINISTER OF STATE FOR
INFORMATION & BROADCASTING
AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS
INDIA

New Delhi-I,
6 February, 1984.

MESSAGE

I am glad to know that the bi-centenary of Baba Jassa Singh Ahluwalia is being celebrated during February, 1984.

Baba Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was a legend in his own life time, who inspired people of Punjab to fight against the tyranny and injustice of the rulers. Baba Jassa Singh was an embodiment of courage, bravery and self-sacrifice. He is not only the pride of Punjab but of whole country. As a national hero he will always be a source of inspiration to all Indians and his acts of bravery will be remembered by the posterity with great pride.

I send my best wishes on the occasion.

H.K.L. Bhagat
(H.K.L. Bhagat)

सत्यमेव जयते

कृषि मंत्री
भारत सरकार
नई दिल्ली-११०००१
MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
NEW DELHI-110001

January 30, 1984
Magha , 1905(SE)

M E S S A G E

I am extremely happy to learn that the bi-centenary of one of the greatest sons of India, Baba Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, is going to be celebrated this year. The life of this great relentless fighter is a unique example of selfless service and fearlessness. Freedom of his countrymen was the sole mission of his life and till his last breath he strove for it. His courage, devotion and selflessness are ever-inspiring and deserve to be emulated by each and every Indian.

I wish the celebrations all success.

(Rao Birendra Singh)

सत्यमेव जयते
GOVERNOR

RAJ BHAVAN, PUNJAB.
CHANDIGARH.

M E S S A G E

I am happy to know that the bi-centenary celebrations of Baba Jassa Singh Ahluwalia are being celebrated from 12th March, this year.

It is a befitting tribute to the many-splendoured personality of Babaji that the celebrations are being inaugurated by the Prime Minister herself. Following the footsteps of Great Gurus, Babaji,too, rendered ceaseless services to protect the rich cultural heritage of the country. He stood like a rock and fought relentlessly like a lion and braved the onslaught of the tyrannic rulers of the time. He symbolises a unique combination of a warrior par excellence, and a spiritual leader of very high order. Like their ancestors, the coming generations will always show great respect and reverence to Babaji.

I extend my best wishes for the success of the bi-centenary celebrations.

(B.D.PANDE)
Governor of Punjab
14-2-84

GOVERNOR
ORISSA

RAJ BHAVAN
BHUBANESWAR

MESSAGE

Baba Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was the symbol of struggle and sacrifice who dedicated his entire life for up-holding the causes of Indian civilization and culture. A great warrior and spiritual leader, he fought relentlessly against tyranny and oppression in driving away the foreign invaders. The heroic deeds of his liberation-struggle adorne the pages of Indian History.

I pay my respectful homage to this great son of India on the occasion of the bi-centenary celebrations and earnestly hope that his message of unity and integrity will continue to inspire generations in India.

I send my good wishes for the success of the bi-Centenary Celebrations.

B. Pande.

(B. N. Pande)
Governor, Orissa.
31/1/84

JAG PARVESH CHANDRA

NO. 722/CEC/84/9

मुख्य कार्यकारी पार्षद
दिल्ली प्रशासन, दिल्ली
CHIEF EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR
DELHI ADMINISTRATION, DELHI

दिल्ली, दिनांक - 6 FEB 1984
Delhi, Dated

MESSAGE

I am glad that you are organising the bi-centenary celebrations of Baba Jassa Singh the legendary hero of Punjab who twice defeated the agressor - Ahmad Shah Abadali. He is also called the emancipator of women and the down - trodden. It is, therefore, in the fitness of things that you have decided to organise the function to pay rich tributes to this great hero and leader of Punjab.

I wish the celebrations all success.

Jag Parvesh Chandra

(JAG PARVESH CHANDRA)

Dr. P.N. Chopra,
Chairman &
Chief Editor,
Souvenir Committee,
Sardar Mohan Singh Building,
Connaught Lane,
NEW DELHI-110001

MESSAGE

Baba Jassa Singh Sahib occupies a unique position in the history of the Sikh community . A Sikh by honest conviction , Baba Jassa Singh Sahib embodied in his own lifetime , the precepts and teachings of the saintly Sikh Gurus , whose disciple he was . Dauntless in adversity , Baba Jassa Singh Sahibs compassion , integrity and devotion to the Panth was a byword among the Sikh Misals of that epoch . He strode the contemporary scene as a Colossus , a bulwark against tyranny and as a defender of the oppressed . All the while , eschewing personal glorification and honour for the greater glory of the Panth .

When values erode , basic human loyalties founder on the shoals of personal avarice and established social orders are threatened , it is natural for us to seek guidance , fortitude and purposeful resolve from the lives , precepts and achievements of great leaders of men , such as Baba Jassa Singh Sahib .

In the year of the Bi-Centenary of the death anniversary of Baba Jassa Singh Sahib , it is but fitting that we seek inspiration from Baba Jassa Singh Sahibs precepts , his humane conduct and his humility in the service of a cause . Only by attempting to emulate this great Panthic leaders virtues , in our own spheres of life , can we endeavour to ensure that the Ahluwalia Baradri of which Baba Jassa Singh Sahib is the founder , the Sikh Community and the Nation , continue to prosper .

Sukhjit Singh

(SUKHJIT SINGH)

The Villa ,
Kapurthala ,

I9 January I984

ਤਿਨ ਕਾ ਜਨਮ ਸਫਲ
ਹੈ ਜੋ ਚਲਹਿ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਭਾਇ

ਸਰੀ ਰਾਗੁ ਮਹਲਾ ੩

Fruitful is the life of those
who walk according to the
True Guru's will

Sri Rag Mahala 3

Baba Jassa Singh Ahluwalia-His Life and Times (1718-1783)

By Brig. Sukhjit Singh, MVC, Maharaja Kapurthala

The history of the evolution of the Sikh community, its transformation into a militant sect as a defence against religious persecution and the emergence of the Sikh theocratic confederacy under the Sikh Misala or clans, culminating in a blaze of glory with the Sikh kingdom under Maharaja Ranjit Singh of the Punjab, is a saga of stoic perserverence, courage, fortitude and sacrifice. The Sikh kingdom of the Punjab ultimately succumbed to the inherent failings of Man, avarice and a disregard for the ethics and principles which their forefathers had enshrined in terms of personal sacrifice and human endurance.

In the turbulent early eighteenth century, the emergence of the Sikh theocratic confederacy under the Misals, can perhaps be regarded as the genesis of the Sikh kingdom of the Punjab. It is in the laying of this unique foundation, that the life and achievements of Baba Jassa Singh, the formost Sikh chieftain of his time, assumes special significance. Baba Jassa Singh's life and times formed the cornerstone of this firm foundation.

Childhood and Early Youth.

Born in 1718, Baba Jassa Singh's father, Badr Singh was one of the Sikhs baptised by the Sikh congregation of Guru Govind Singh (1666-1708) the Tenth Guru of the Sikhs. Chroniclers of that epoch state that Baba Jassa Singh's birth was occasioned after a blessing bestowed upon his parents by Guru Govind Singh. The village of Ahlu, about 20 kms south east of Lahore, which was the ancestral home of Badr Singh, was soon to be immortalised by his son, Jassa Singh, who would assume the surname of Ahluwalia at the head of one of the most important Sikh misals of that period.

. Badr Singh died in 1722, leaving his widow and young son in the care of his brother-in-law, Bagh Singh. As traditionally chronicled, Badr Singh's widow and young son spent the next seven years in the service of Mata Sundri, the widow of Guru Govind Singh who was also the symbolic head of the Sikh community and was living in retirement in Delhi. It was in these formative years that Baba Jassa

Singh, as a youth, developed his piety and deep conviction in the Sikh faith.

In 1728, the then emerging leader of the nascent Sikh community, Sardar Kapur Singh, while visiting Delhi to pay homage to Mata Sundri, was deeply impressed by the deportment and piety of young Jassa Singh and on obtaining Mata Sundri's permission Jassa Singh and his Mother, were taken into his fold. Tradition has it that on Jassa Singh's departure with Sardar Kapur Singh, young Jassa Singh was blessed by Mata Sundri, presented with weapons and a prophecy made that Jassa Singh would achieve fame among the Sikhs and that the symbols of royalty and honour would accompany him in the days ahead.

As a youth, Jassa Singh was formally initiated into the Sikh fold by Sardar Kapur Singh who administered 'Pahul' or the Sikh baptism to the young Jassa Singh and commenced his training in the arts of war and statecraft. Jassa Singh was an adept pupil and was well versed in Persian and Gurmukhi. These traits were to stand him in good stead in the years that followed. His preceptor, Sardar Kapour Singh had meanwhile in 1733, been endowed with the title of Nawab by the Sikh assembly. This title had been offered to the Sikhs as a conciliatory gesture by the Mughal government at the behest of Zakarya Khan. The indomitable spirit of the Khalsa has proved insurmountable and the Mughal authorities sought an easier way out from their predicament of constant confrontation. Henceforth, the Sikhs banded together under the common leadership of their elected Chief, Nawab Kapur Singh Faizullahpuria who had adopted Jassa Singh Ahluwalia as his son.

After numerous viccisitudes and a continuous armed confrontation first with the Mughal Government in the Punjab and then against the Afghan invasions into India, commencing in 1739 under Nadir Shah, the Sikhs were able to celebrate Baisakhi on 20th March 1748 at Amritsar, their Holy City, after a long interval. On this occassion, Nawab Kapur Singh requested the Khalsa to releive him of his office and at his suggestion, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was chosen the supreme commander of the Dal Khalsa as the fighting body of the Sikhs was now named.

Thus did Nawab Kapur Singh, the first elected head of the Sikh confederacies, on his death in 1753, bequeath his honours and the leadership of the Khalsa to Baba Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, saying that he was destined to be a "Badshah" or King. A title (Sultan-ul-Quam or King of the Community) subsequently accorded to Baba Jassa Singh by his followers. Notwithstanding his having been treated as son both by Mata Sundri, Guru Govind Singh's widow and Nawab Kapur Singh Faizullahpuria, Baba Jassa Singh did not aspire to any authority over the Khalsa and was content to be elected head of the Ahluwalia Misal and to establish his headquarters at Fatheabad on the banks of the Beas River where he set up his military post in a fort called Khaluana. Fatheabad remained his capital till 1780 when he moved it to Kapurthala. The de-facto authority exercised by Baba Jassa Singh over the Misals of the Sikh confederacy however, was a direct corollary of the veneration he was held in by the Sikh community for his personal valour and piety. Initiation into the Panth or Sikh faith or fold at the hands of Baba Jassa Singh was higly prized and Raja Alha Singh of Patiala was one of his initiates in 1761 as were his other lineal descendants, namely Rajas Amar Singh in 1765 and Sahib Singh, 1782, the latter being initiated at the Gurudwara in Taran Tarn. Raja Gajpat Singh of Jind who had been forcibly converted to islam when a prisoner in Delhi, was also reinstated into the Sikh faith by Baba Jassa Singh who administered 'Pahul' to Raja Gajpat Singh and publically ate with him from the same dish. Similarly, in 1780, the Sodhi's of Kartarpur who were descendents of Dhirmal, a grandson of the Sixth Guru, Guru Hargovind Ji and who had been ostracised by the Sikhs because of his treachery to the Guru, were re-admitted to the Sikh faith under the directions of Baba Jassa Singh.

It was however Ahmad Shah Abdali's inroads into the Punjab from 1748-1767, that exercised a very decisive influence in the history of the rise of the Sikh power under the stewardship of Baba Jassa Singh. In 1761, commenced what may be termed as the most glorious chapter in early Sikh history. It is a saga of a duel in which the all powerful Afghan Conquerer was worn out by a relatively obscure people, who successfully wrested from his closed fist, that part of India which the house of Taimur had failed to preserve for him.

Exploits of Baba Jassa Singh.

Liberation of Amritsar, 1748. The Sikhs were able to liberate Amritsar and assume control of their Holy Shrine Harimandir Sahib in 1748 when Baba Jassa Singh slew Salabat Khan in combat and took control of the city of Amritsar.

Defeat of the Mughal Governors and Faujdars, 1761. In 1761, the Dal Khalsa under the leadership of Baba Jassa Singh, after the withdrawl of Ahmad Shah Abdali, successfully engaged and defeated Khwaja Mirza Khan, the Governor in charge of the districts of Gujrat Sialkot, Pasrur and Aurangabad (Jehlum), as also the Faujdars of the Jalandhar Doab.

Capture of Lahore, November 1761. After celebrating Diwali in November 1761, the Dal Khalsa under Baba Jassa Singh's command, attacked and caputred Lahore. The earliest Sikh coinage is said to have been minted on this occassion.

Liberation of Captives, 1761. Baba Jassa Singh's valorous spirit is again in evidence when in 1761, his troops liberated some two thousand women captives from Ahmad Shah Addali's clutches and thereafter, escorted them back to their homes. This act of Baba Jassa

Singh, earned him the appelation of "Bandi Chhor" or 'Liberator'.

The "Wadda Ghallughara" or Great Holocaust, February 1762. Stung by the audacity of the Sikhs, Ahmad Shah Abdali moved swiftly to exact retribution. On the morning of 5 February 1762, the Abdali troops, in concert with the Chiefs of Sirhind and Malerkotla, attacked the Dal Khalsa near the village of Kup in the neighbourhood of Malerkotla. Caught by surprise, the Dal Khalsa under the indomitable Baba Jassa Singh, fought an epic rearguard action while covering the withdrawl of the main body of the Dal Khalsa and their families into relative safety of the jungle and desert fastness of Barnala, Jakhal and Hissar. The Dal Khalsa paid a heavy price in this engagement, losing an estimated 25,000 fighting men. It is said that Baba Jassa Singh himself, sustained twenty two wounds on his body in this encounter. On his return journey, Ahmad Shah Adbali razed the Harimandir at Amritsar to the ground.

Sack of Sirhind, 1764. The legendary resiliance of the Sikh community asserted itself with remarkable alacrity. The "Great Holocaust" being viewed by the survivors as a purification of the metal of the Khalsa. Within four months of this grevious blow, the Sikhs had forced Ahmad Shah Abdali to withdraw to Lahore from Amritsar in October 1762 and were celebrating Diwali in their Holy City of Amritsar. The Sikhs also vowed to rebuild the Holy Harimandir.

In 1764, the Sikhs under Baba Jassa Singh, attacked Sirhind. The Dal Khalsa army comprised seven Misals under his overall command. The Governor of Sirhind, Zain Khan, was killed and the town put to torch. From the plunder of Sirhind, Baba Jassa Singh placed his entire personal share worth nine lakhs of rupees on a sheet, spread on the ground, and made the other Sikh Chiefs contribute another six lakhs of rupees to this collection for the rebuilding of the Holy Harimandir in Amritsar. This act of Baba Jassa Singh is known in history as "Guru ki Chaddar" or the 'Sheet of God'.

Rebuilding of the Holy Harimandir in Amritsar. 1764 As a result of Baba Jassa Singh's initiative after the sack of Sirhind, reconstruction work on the Holy Shrine of the Sikhs, Harimandir Sahib, was commenced on II Baisakh, Samvat 1821 Bikrami (1764) when Baba Jassa Singh laid the foundation of this Holy Temple. Baba Jassa Singh also built a 'Katra' or residential quarters in Amritsar known as the Katra Ahluwalia, adjoining the precincts of the Harimandir Sahib.

Expedition into the Ganga Doab, 1764. As retribution aagainst excesses committed on the Hindu populace in the Upper Ganga Doab, Baba Jassa Singh led an expedition into this area as far East as Moradabad, to chastise the functionaries of Najib-ud-dowlah of Delhi. Unable to defeat the Sikhs, Najib-ud-dowlah bought peace by a payment of eleven lakhs of rupees.

Occupation of Kapurthala, 1779. Baba Jassa Singh wrested the territory of Kapurthala from Rai Ibrahim Bhatti in 1779. Thus did the birth place of the Sikh faith, Sultanpur Lodhi, where Guru Nanak Dev ji the first Guru of the Sikhs preached his message of universal love and faith (1469-1538) come into the fold of the Sikh Misals. Baba Jassa Singh now moved the capital of the Ahluwalia Misal to Kapurthala.

Capture of the Red Fort in Delhi, 1783. The Dal Khalsa under Baba Jassa Singh, advanced upon Delhi in March 1783. The Dal Khalsa was joined in this expedition by Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, another eminent Sikh Chieftain who dominated the Hansi, Hissar region. After some fighting, the Red Fort was captured by the Sikhs on 11 March 1783.

Administrative and secular character of Baba Jassa Singh.

Under the order of Baba Jassa Singh, the first record of the Sikh conquests and the establishment of "Thanas" or military posts, by the various Misals, was conceived. A 'Misal' or file of the conquests of various Sikh cheifs was maintained in each chief's name at the Akal Bunga in Amritsar, which became a record office during the ascendency of the Sikh power. The system of revenue collection and protection cess was also rationalised under Baba Jassa Singh's directions.

Baba Jassa Singh is also reputed to have personally led two expeditions to Lahore in order to chastise the butchers of Lahore as part of the Khalsa policy of observing the sanctity of the cow.

Baba Jassa Singh was secular in his outlook. His crusade was directed exclusively against foreign rule based upon religious bigotary and persecution. Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs alike served him with honour and distinction. yet himself, he remained always "a Sikh by honest conviction".

Tributes paid to the Khalsa.

Under the guidance of Baba Jassa Singh, the Khalsa earned a reputation for valour and chivalry. This is attested to by such tributes as are paid to the Khalsa by writers like Ali-ud-Din, who in his Ibratnama writing after the defeat of Jahan Khan at Sialkot, states:

> "But as the Sikhs of old would not lay their hands on women they sent them safely to Jammu".

Again, Forster in his book "Forster's Travels", Volume I, Page 279, writing after the sack of Sirhind, states—

> "The Sikhs set a bound to the impulse of revenge and though the Afghan massacre and persecution must have been deeply imprinted on their minds, they did not, it is said, destroy one prisoner in cold blood".

Assessment of the Sikh Confederacy.

The Sikh religious movement having been placed in the crucible of persecution, transformed itself into a system where existed an element of theocracy, along with a strong sense of brotherhood. The Sikhs now became a religious minded warlike fraternity, intensely conscious of their order.

Contemporary historians have described the Sikh constitution, as being to the casual observer, an aristocracy because of the prominent place occupied by the Sikh Sardars or Chiefs, though popular power branched through many of its parts. In its actual working, it was an aristocracy but in its spirit, it was undoubtedly a democracy. The central authority of the Sikh confederation, as in the case generally with this form of government, was relatively weak inspite of its theocratic character. The Misals were the component parts of the confederation and were confederacies of equals. A Sikh disdained to acknowledge an earthly superior. At no stage however, of Sikh feudalism, was there a haughty nobless as in Rajputana or medieval Europe, nor a patriarchial element in Sikh feudalism. The sole obligation of the members of the confederacies being the obligation of military service.

It has also been further observed that as in all political organisations,an element of decay was also prevelent. Power brought an appetite for more power and in this unmitigated lust for power, lay the seed of corruption. Monarchy degenerates into tyranny, aristocracy stiffens into oligarchy, democracy leads to anarchy. With the pasaage of time, it became impossible to reform or revitalise this complex organism that has been described as "theocratic confederate fuedalism".

Perhaps the most concise summation lies in the immortal description of governance by Keyserling who said :

> "There is no such thing as a better or a worse form of government. There is only a form which is badly adapted or one which is better adapted to conditions as they are and good or bad applies only to the degree to which it gives form to these conditions and makes them productive of great achievement."

An assessment of Baba Jassa Singh-The Leader and the Man.

No finer tribute can be paid to Baba Jassa Singh, as a leader and a devout follower of his faith, than that which appears in the book entitled "Rise of the Sikh Power" written by N K Sinha in 1936, on pages 90 to 92, which is reproduced below in its entirety.

"For the successful termination of the Sikh war of independence, we should give the credit to the entire nation, not to any individual. That would be against the spirit of the whole enterprise. But an exception must be made in favour of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia. To a large extent, he was the soul of many of these apparently isolated undertakings that ultimately brought the war of liberation to a successful termination. The Sarbat Khalsa would invariably nominate him as the commander in all its combined undertakings. But his ascendency was precisely that which superior minds acquire in times of difficulty. No badge distinguished him from the common soldiers. The Sikh horseman recognised his general in the most handsome, tall figure and by the fact that he surpassed every one of his men in temperance as well as in toil; in valour as also in conduct. He was more than anything else a religious man and the greatest Sikh chieftains like Amar Singh of Patiala would consider it an honour to be initiated by him. His firmness was allied to his piety and it never made him falter in his firmness was allied to his peity and it never made him falter in his determination to resist. Retreat was ever open to him; but he never succumbed to the temptation to which Alha Singh was a victim. In 1767, Ahmad Shah made a special effort to win him over, and it is a certainty that at any stage of the struggle, the Durrani Chief would have been only too glad not only to pardon him, but also to grant him lands and titles as he had done in the case of the Patiala Chieftain. But he never faltered. What further raised him above others, was the utter absence of jealousy in his mind. He was a whole souled patriot yet for the sake of unity, he would at times toletate the lapses of others. Alha Singh was very jealous of him, but after Alha Singh's submission to the Durrani Chief, it was Jassa Singh Ahluwalia's persuasion that ultimately prevented the Sikhs from falling upon the Patiala Chieftain and they agreed to spare him on his joining the Sikh Army in its attack on Sirhind. His career, a romantic alternation of victories and escapes, his courage and patriotism, a theme of admiration and emulation, his moral qualities and most conspicuously his piety, a support and consolation in the darkest hour."

Baba Jassa Singh Ahluwalia Bicentenary Committee

Members of the National Preparatory Committee (NPC)

Patron-in-chief
Maharaja Brigadier Sukhjit Singhji of Kapurthala

1. Sardar Buta Singh	Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, Sports, Works & Housing, New Delhi (Chairman
2. Shri Balram Jakhar	Speaker, Lok Sabha
3. Shri Jagan Nath Kaushal	Minister for Law & Company Affairs
4. Shri H.K.L. Bhagat	Minister for Information and Broadcasting
5. Shrimati Sheila Kaul	Minister for Education and Culture
6. H.E. Sardar Gurdial Singh	Uganda High Commissioner in India. (19-A, Rajdoot Marg Chanakyapuri, New Delhi)
7. Maharaja Amarinder Singh	M.P., Maharaja of Patiala
8. Maharaja Harindra Singh	Maharaja of Faridkot
9. S. Daljit Singh	Chairman, Pure Drinks New Delhi, (President)
10. Dr. G.S. Dhillon	Former Speaker Lok Sabha M-4, Green Avenue, Amritsar
11. Sardar M.S. Saathi	Mayor of Delhi
12. Kanwar Vishavjit Prithvijit Singh	M.P., 80 Lodi Estate, New Delhi
13. Sardar H.S. Hanspal	M.P., 40, Ashok Road New Delhi
14. Sardar Charanjit Singh	M.P., 9, Friends Colony New Delhi
15. Dr. S.S. Sidhu	Advisor to Governor of Punjab Chandigarh
16. Dr. P.N. Srivastava	Vice-Chancellor, Jawahar Lal Nehru University, New Delhi
17. Dr. Gurbakhsh Singh	Vice-Chancellor, Delhi University, Delhi
18. Dr. R.C. Paul	Vice-Chancellor, Punjab University, Chandigarh
19. Dr. J.S. Grewal	Vice-Chancellor G. N. D. University, Amritsar
20. Dr. S.S. Johl	Vice-Chancellor, Punjabi University, Patiala
21. Prof. G.S. Talib	80-B, Model Town, Patiala
22. Sardar H.S. Malik ICS (Retd)	Former Ambassador to France
23. Dr. Ganda Singh	Lower Mall, Patiala
24. Khwaja Husan Sani Nizami	Dargah Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia, New Delhi
25. Principal G.S. Dhillon	Director, Sri Dashmesh Anandpur Sahib
26. Dr. P.N. Chopra	Chief Editor "Towards Freedom" (ICHR) New Delhi
27. Prof. B.R. Grover	Director, ICHR, New Delhi
28. Sardar G.S. Tohra	M.P., President, SGPC, Amritsar
29. Sardar H.S. Manchanda	President, DGPC, Delhi
30. Sardar Inderjit Singh	Chairman, Guru Nanak Foundation, Delhi

31.	Prof. Harbans Singh	General Secretary; Bhai Vir Singh Sahit Sadan, New Delhi
32.	Sardar R.S. Narula	Chief Justice (Retd.), Delhi
33.	Prof. Harbans Singh	Punjabi University, Patiala
34.	Sardar Harnam Singh Suri	11/3, Pusa Road, New Delhi
35.	Sardar A.S. Bagga	Executive Director, P. & S. B. New Delhi
36.	Sardar Umrao Singh	Ex-Minister, Punjab V. & P.O. Wadala (Jullundur)
37.	Prof. Harbakhsh Singh	Chairman, Punjab School Education Board, SAS Nagar Chandigarh
38.	Sardar Bhopinder Singh	Justice of Peace, Bombay
39.	Dr. M.L. Ahluwalia	Deputy Director, National Archives (Retd.)
40.	Sardar Rajinder Singh	37, Parag Apartment, Versowa Beach, Bombay-61
41.	Shri Raja Kulkarni	Ex-M.P., Maharashtra, Bombay
42.	Sardar Beant Singh	Ex-Minister, Punjab
43.	Sardar Avtar Singh Gatwali	Ex-Minister, Punjab
44.	Sardar Amarjit Singh IAS	Secretary to Governor, Punjab Chandigarh
45	General Jagjit Singh Aurora	A-55, New Friends Colony New Delhi
46.	Shri Arun Singh	2 A, Moti Lal Nehru Marg New Delhi
47.	Sardar Gurbachan Singh Nidhark	7, Rawtani Chambers 9th Floor, Khar, Bombay-52
48.	Raja Ranbir Singh	New Delhi
49.	Shri G.S. Sidhu	Commissioner, Income Tax Mayur Bhawan, New Delhi
50.	Prof. Gurcharan Singh	8/B, Model Town, Patiala (Secretary-General)
51.	Major G.S. Ahluwalia	C/517, Defence Colony New Delhi-24 (Jt. Secretary)

Schedule of Functions

THE INAUGURAL FUNCTION

The Inaugural Function of the Bicentennial will be held at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi on March 12, 1984. The Prime Minister Shrimati Indira Gandhi will preside.

Function at Babaji's Samadh at Burj Baba Atal Sahib, Amritsar

Although a number of functions under the auspices of various organizations including SGPC and other cultural and religious organizations have already taken place since October 20, 1983 (the actual date when the Bicentenary was due) the Committee will hold a function at the Samadh of Babaji at Burj Baba Atal Sahib in Amritsar, sometime in April, 1984.

Kirtan Durbar

As is well-known, Babaji was very fond of reciting Kirtan of Gurbani. It has, therefore, been decided to hold a series of Kirtan Durbars in various parts of the country beginning with the Kirtan Durbar in Delhi in April/May.

Kavi Durbars

Kavi Durbas will be held in Delhi, Amritsar and other places in May/June.

National Seminar

A national-level seminar in collaboration with ICHR, Delhi, will take place some time in August this year.

Re-naming of Road in Delhi

The Delhi Municipal Corporation at the initiative of the Mayor of Delhi, Sardar M.S. Saathi has planned to re-name one of the important roads in Delhi after the name of Babaji. The formal ceremony is expected to take place sometime in June.

Installation of Statue of Babaji

It has been decided in principle to instal a larger-than-life statue of Babaji at a prominent place in Delhi. It is hoped that the formal selection of the site and other details will be worked out by June/July this year. The actual installation of the statue may, however, take sometime.

A Suitable Memorial to Mata Sundariji

It is proposed to set up a suitable memorial to Mata Sundariji inside Turkman Gate, Delhi where she lived for a long time.

Commemoration Volume

A Commemoration Volume containing research articles and tributes to Babaji will be brought out by September this year.

Musical Evening (Kapurthala Gharana)

It is proposed to arrange performance of classical music (Kapurthala-Gharana) in Delhi by famous artists from India and Pakistan some time in September this year.

Portrait of Babaji

Although many portraits of Babaji are in use, the Committee will select a standard portrait of Babaji with the help of a Committee of experts. The standard portrait is likely to be released soon.

Sardarni Mohan Singh Ahluwalia Literary Awards

Sardar Daljit Singh, Chairman, Pure Drinks (P) Ltd. New Delhi has donated a sum of Rs. 20,000/- for being awarded to the authors/publishers of the best books on the life of Babaji. The function to give the awards is likely to take place in September/October.

Release of Short Film

Shri H.K.L. Bhagat, Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Government of India has issued instructions for the production of a Short Film on the life and times of Babaji in all the fourteen languages for compulsory showing all over the country and abroad. It is hoped the Film will be ready for release by October this year.

Installation of a Plaque in the Holy Precincts of the Golden Temple

The Committee is approaching the SGPC and Sri Darbar Sahib Committee to instal a Plaque in the Holy precincts of the Golden Temple to commemorate the great services rendered to Sri Darbar Sahib by Babaji after its wanton destruction by the Afghan invader Ahmed Shah Abdali. As is wellknown, Babaji

collected a sum of foutrteen lakh rupees by spreading a sheet known as 'Guru-ki-Chaddar' for this noble cause. Out of this Babaji contributed nine lakh rupees, personally.

Preservation of Monuments connected with the life of Babaji

There are a few historical monuments including a Haveli in Kapurthala and the Samadh of Babaji in the Holy Precincts of Burj Baba Atal Sahib, Amritsar. Whereas the Samadh is being looked after by one Mahantji, the Haveli of Babaji is in a state of neglect. The Committee is approaching the Department of Archaeology, Government of India and Punjab Government to take urgent steps for its proper up-keep and preservation. The question of better management of the Samadh may also be considered.

University Chairs

The Committee is approaching the University of Delhi, Punjab University, Chandigarh; Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar and Punjabi University, Patiala to establish Sultan-ul-Qaum Baba Jassa Singh Chairs' for Research in some aspects of Punjab history and culture.

Awards of Stipends and Scholarships

The Committee is also planning to institute Stipends and Scholarship to deserving students for pursuing higher studies. One of these could be in the name of Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur, a famous scion of the House of Kapurthala to be given to woman Social Worker.

Inclusion of a chapter on the of life of Babaji in School and College curricula

The Committee is approaching various Universities and Punjab State School Education Board to introduce study of the life and times of Babaji in the curricula of various courses at school and college levels.

Special Programmes by Doordarshan and Akashvani

Shri H.K.L. Bhagat, Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Government of India has issued instructions to Doordarshan and Akashvani to produce special features/discussions on the life and times of Babaji.

Production of a Book by National Book Trust, India

Shrimati Sheila Kaul, Minister for Education and Culture, Government of India has assured the Committee that National Book Trust, India will examine the possibility of producing a book on the life and times of Babaji in all the Indian languages.

Sound-and-Light Programmes and Plays

The possibility of producing a sound-and-light programme depicting the salient features of the life and times of Babaji is being examined by an expert. The possibility of suitable plays on the life of Babaji is also under study.

Exhibition

There is also a proposal to organize an exhibition of the Holy Relics of Babaji and some of his Comrades-in-arms on March 12, 1984. Along with this an exhibition of books and historical documents may also be organized by a committee of experts. The P.M. has been requested to open the exhibition.

Research on the Life of Babaji

A Sub-Committee of experts has been formed to collect historical ducuments from various centres in India and abroad which will throw fresh light on the life and achievements of Babaji and his companions.

Celebrations Outside India

A strong Representative Committee with H.E. Sardar Gurdial Singh, Uganda's High Commissioner in India as Adviser and Sardar Umrao Singh as Chairman has been formed to organize functions in connection with the Bicentennial in U.K., U.S.A., Canada, Thailand, Malaysia and some of the African countries. Dr. A.S. Marwaha of Los Angeles has already offered to arrange a function.

Celebrations by Punjab Government

The above mentioned details of celebrations relate to the various programmes to be organized by the NPC. In addition to the above, the Punjab Government will organize various functions under the auspices of the Punjab Committee headed by Dr. S.S. Sidhu, Adviser to the Governor. Efforts will, however, be made to coordinate the work of the two Committees.

Institute of Continuing Education after the name of Babaji

Kanwar Vishvajit Prithvijit Singh, M.P. who is connected with the House of Kapurthala has offered a large piece of land in Kapurthala for building an Institute of Continuing Education. The matter was discussed in the meeting of the National Preparatory Committee on December 6, 1983 where Shrimati Sheila Kaul, Minister of Education and Culture had assured the house that she would examine the proposal favourably. Kanwar Sahib has been requested to take up the matter with the Hon'ble Minister for Education, Government of India.

Release of a Commemorative Stamp

It has been decided to approach Shri V.N. Gadgil, Minister for Communication, Government of India for issuing a Commemorative Stamp to mark the Bicentennial

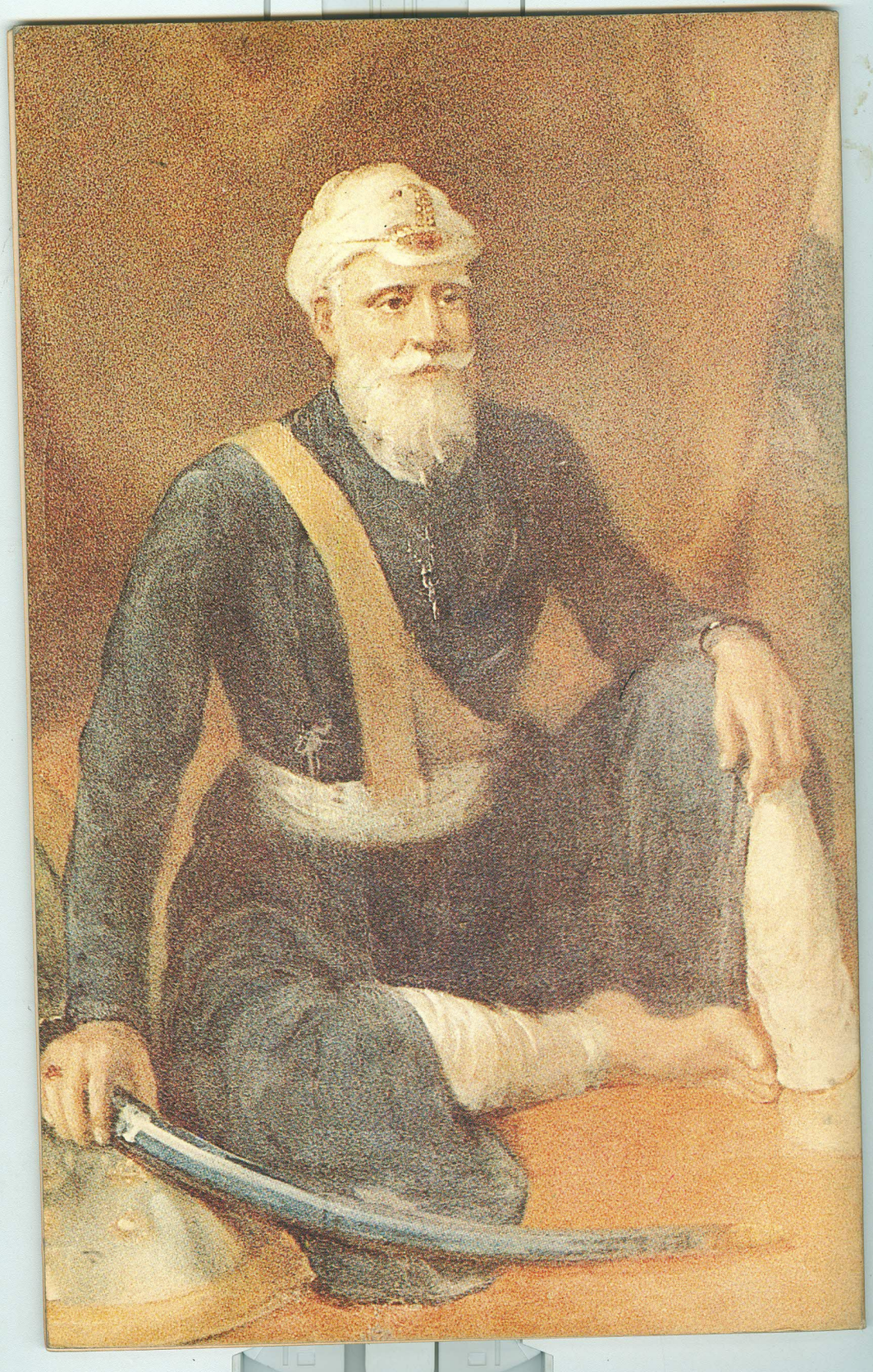
All-India Basketball Tournament

Kapurthala is a famous Nursery of Basketball Players. An All-India Basketball Tournament in honour of the Bicentennial may be held sometime during the Summer this year which will be a regular feature.

Celebration in Haryana

A separate Committee for organising suitable functions in Haryana has been formed.

Valedictory Function

The Valedictory Function to mark the closing of the Bicentennial will take place some time in November this year in which persons connected with the family of Babaji and other prominent personalities will be suitably honoured.

The Valedictory Function to be held in November, 1984 will not mark the end of the work taken up by the Memorial Committee to project the great services rendered by Babaji to the Country. The Bicentenary Committee is a permanent body which will carry on its work after the end of the Bicentenary year.